

The Narratives of Migration: Between Politics and Policies

CERC Migration Annual Conference 2023



MAY 10–11, 2023

TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY, TORONTO

The CERC in Migration and Integration is generously supported by:



Government
of Canada

Gouvernement
du Canada

Canada

Canada Excellence
Research Chairs

Chaires d'excellence en
recherche du Canada



THE NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION: BETWEEN POLITICS AND POLICIES

OVERVIEW

Narratives are an important part of migration policy, as they are used to convey a position, create legitimacy or justify a means to an end. All migration narratives are essentially political. Some concentrate more on who we are as a society and who we want to be – or who belongs and who does not. Others focus on policy choices that both directly and indirectly construct insider and outsider criteria for who is considered an integrated migrant.

Narratives do not emerge naturally, nor are they fully the products of political engineering ex nihilo. They are usually forged through a long process that incorporates existing dominant discourses about a nation and its immigration and emigration history, privileging certain explanations and prescriptions for action. Narratives are also influenced by transnational discourses and broader hegemonic views on migration and its governance.

Deconstructing narratives offers a means of uncovering power relations, showing how migration is an inherently political process and demonstrating that a national interest on migration does not exist. Rather, there are competing visions and interests, and beyond any demonstration of what works and what does not, it is important to understand how and who promotes specific explanations and legitimizes in specific ways dominant and alternative views on migration and integration.





Such critical inquiry is particularly important today because of the potential of advanced communication technologies (and their pitfalls too, of course). All narratives, particularly those related to migration, travel much faster today on the Internet and via social media. The latter offers new methods of engagement and can democratize dominant narratives, as it gives average citizens a platform from which to speak up and raise their voices. At the same time, as we all know, social media is particularly dangerous, as it easily forms echo chambers in which people only listen to those who agree with them. While media studies have long shown that people tend to read or listen to views they agree with, the Internet has brought this insularity to new levels both because of how easy it is for people to remain isolated and how simple it is to go online and forge transnational social or political communities.

We are also particularly aware that narratives of migration have been dominated by those constructed in the destination countries of Europe, North America and, to an extent, Oceania. Much less attention has been paid to the emigration, immigration or transit-migrant narratives of other countries and world regions. There is a need, therefore, to decentre our understanding of migration narratives in terms of the above geographies and in terms of actors as well: Whose voices are heard most? Who shapes the narratives?



WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2023

8:30-9:20 AM EDT REGISTRATION AND WELCOME REFRESHMENTS

9:20-9:30 AM EDT WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

**Anna Triandafyllidou, Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration
Mohamed Lachemi, President and Vice-Chancellor, Toronto Metropolitan University**

**SESSION 1:
9:30-11 AM EDT
MIGRATION NARRATIVES IN SETTLER COLONIAL NATIONS**

Migration narratives in settler colonial states emerge from transnational dynamics rooted in global histories and contemporary realities that feature, challenge, justify and/or (re)produce complex and shifting hierarchies of membership among and between Indigenous, settler, racialized and so-called migrant members of these societies. In these states, migration narratives can be thought of as coming from above, and they often attempt to legitimize or conceal these states' origins and contemporary relations to Indigenous peoples. These ostensible nations of immigrants also simultaneously express xenophilic and xenophobic discourses and policies that offer forms of inclusion for some migrants while excluding and disciplining others. While some settler narratives, such as those of multiculturalism, often celebrate immigrants and their contributions, contemporary narratives also frequently feature racialized categories, such as the asylum seeker or refugee, the foreign worker, the economic migrant or the security threat. Such labels and narratives materially contribute to the levels of opportunity, social inclusion and political or economic freedom (or unfreedom) experienced by those to whom they are applied. This panel will consider the contemporary state of both cross-cutting and country-specific migration narratives in these states.

Chair: John Carlaw | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

The complex and competing narratives concerning migration and migrants in settler colonial states: The case of the CANZ (Canada, Australia, New Zealand) states | **Paul Spoonley**, Massey University

Power, migration narratives and the elimination of the native: Citizenship and belonging in Canada, Australia and the United States | **Yasmeen Abu-Laban**, University of Alberta

Incarcerated stories: Indigenous women and violence in the settler capitalist state | **Shannon Speed (Chickasaw)**, University of California, Los Angeles

11-11:30 AM EDT BREAK

**SESSION 2:
11:30 AM-1 PM EDT
MIGRATION NARRATIVES IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA**

Social media has allowed for global conversations and the sharing of personal opinions in a variety of new spaces. It is distinct from traditional outlets like radio, television, print media and public rallies because of its wide reach, intense decentralization, high level of interactions and the ability it gives users to personalize the



type of information they receive. Social media is constantly transforming. Emerging platforms and functions allow migrants and non-migrants to represent migration processes and migrants themselves. For instance, newcomers are represented in online discussion forums and Twitter conversations as essential workers, contributing citizens and resilient communities. However, xenophobic and discriminatory views on migrants are rampant as well, such as the closed Facebook group Stand up for Sweden (Stå upp för Sverige). In this session, participants will talk about the salience of migration narratives on social media and their effect on public discourse, actors in the physical world and even migration policies.

Chair: Stein Monteiro | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

[Understanding digital racism and xenophobia: Toward a theoretical model](#) | **Mattias Ekman**, Stockholm University

[Examining anti-social behaviour in online discussions about the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine](#) | **Anatoliy Gruz**, Toronto Metropolitan University

[“Breadth – depth – back to breadth”: What can we learn about migration narratives among non-elites on Twitter through the application of computational and qualitative social science analytical strategies?](#) | **Bindi Shah**, University of Southampton

1-2 PM EDT

LUNCH BREAK

ROUNDTABLE

2-3 PM EDT

MIGRATION AND MOBILITY NARRATIVES IN THE ARTS

Short audiovisual clips created by immigrants to narrate their own stories offer wide audiences unmediated encounters with immigrants’ voices, their points of view and their interpretations of their lives. This situates immigrants as subjects, highlighting their human dignity, and each individual story remains a unique part of a mosaic that does not disappear in the overall pattern. Immigrants maintain their singularity, resisting generalizations that can lead to stereotyping. Nevertheless, the usage of film entails pitfalls inherent to the media. For example, when situated as the clips’ protagonists, immigrants are distinguished via convention from the crowd and imbued with a hero’s aura. This solicits identification with them, while others remain blurred. Additionally, immigration-focused short films, like any audiovisual product, are inevitably manipulative yet do not warn their viewers of such manipulation. Audiences, especially young ones, are not well versed in critical thinking. This panel considers how a creative producer could construct messages of immigrants and immigration that are humanistic, pluralistic, respectful, reliable and thought provoking while also encouraging audiences to embrace critical lenses – and use them.

Chair: Anna Triandafyllidou | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

Orit Kamir | Center for Human Dignity

[The narratives of migration: Between politics and policies](#) | **Cyrus Sundar Singh**, CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

[Deconstructing narratives from the narrative maker point of view](#) | **Alberto Bougleux**, Documentary Filmmaker

[Collaborating across disciplines](#) | **Bernadette Klausberger**, Migration Matters



**SESSION 3:
3-5:00 PM EDT
NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION IN EMERGING REGIONAL POWERS**

Contrary to dominant Western media frames and political narratives, a larger proportion of global migration takes place within the Global South and between low- and middle-income countries than from the South to the North. South-South migration plays a crucial role in global remittance flows and relationships between migration and development and other social processes as well as in the political and economic status of emerging regional powers. Countries in the Global South – particularly those emerging as regional powers – adopt their own narratives to make sense of both emigration and immigration, sometimes resisting the dominant perspectives of countries in the Global North and other times acquiescing to and adopting those views. This panel will decentre common narratives framing Global South states as places of origin or transit to the Global North and explore migration-related narratives in emerging powers through cross-regional perspectives from Latin America, the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia.

Chair: Jérémie Molho, CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

[Turkey's migration narratives and strategic temporality](#) | **Zeynep Sahin-Mencütek**, Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies and CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

[Migration and development in Morocco: A myth!](#) | **Mehdi Lahlou**, National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics

[Evolving migration narratives in Russia](#) | **Andrei V. Korobkov**, Middle Tennessee State University

[Countering containment and combatting migrant “immoralities”](#) | **Loren B. Landau**, University of Oxford, University of the Witwatersrand

5-6 PM EDT RECEPTION

6-7 PM EDT BUFFET DINNER

THURSDAY, MAY 11, 2022

8:30-9 AM EDT WELCOME REFRESHMENTS

**SESSION 4:
9-10:30 AM EDT
NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION IN CITY-STATES**

Migration has been an essential feature of many small city-states that have had to rely on migrants to build and sustain their fast-paced development agendas. However, the integration of migrants in city-states can be unequal and restrictive depending on their status and skill levels. Several small city-states have relied on forms of circular labour migration to fill jobs in sectors such as construction and domestic labour while only allowing



pathways to permanent residency and citizenship to select groups. These policy choices influence migrants' narratives and lived experiences related to temporariness, mobility, sense of belonging and access to rights. Challenges and complexities related to such policy choices were especially evident during the COVID-19 pandemic and its various lockdowns. This session will highlight the narratives of migration in small city-states in Southeast and East Asia. It discusses how narratives influence migration policies in powerful ways by shaping how challenges and solutions are decided in city-states and how migration influences narratives in return.

Chair: Richa Shivakoti | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

[*Migration narratives in Singapore: From economic imperatives to counter-perspectives on ethnicity and age*](#) | **Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho**, National University of Singapore

[*Narrative of governing emigration: A case study in Hong Kong*](#) | **Eric Fong**, University of Hong Kong

10:30-11 AM EDT BREAK

**SESSION 5:
11 AM-12:30 PM EDT
REGIONAL MIGRATION NARRATIVES: THE CASES OF WEST AND EAST AFRICA**

Historically, migration has been fundamental to the subsistence and livelihoods of people all over Africa. However, there are differing perspectives on what the root causes and consequences of migration are in regional contexts. Additionally, migration governance objectives and goals from the Global North – particularly from the European Union – have dominated and overshadowed regional migration narratives and shaped how migrants and migration in these contexts are perceived as well as the related policy, legal and political approaches. A large amount of research focuses on migration narratives from these regions to the Global North, greatly limiting our understanding of the complexity of regional migrations in Africa. To decentre the knowledge of migration narratives, this session looks at West and East Africa to unpack and examine migration narratives from above and below for a better understanding of the key narratives shaping debate and policy, the actors and shapers of different narratives and the consequences of narratives that shape migration governance within these regional contexts.

Chair: Oreva Olakpe | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

[*Confronting migration narratives with aspirations and the ability to move in Ghana*](#) | **Melissa Mouthaan**, Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and University of Cambridge

[*Unpacked narratives on migration governance and gender in West Africa*](#) | **Mary Boatemaa Setrana**, University of Ghana

[*Narratives on the free movement of people in West Africa*](#) | **Amanda Bisong**, European Centre for Development Policy Management

[*Regional migration narratives: The case of East Africa*](#) | **Girmachew Adugna**, Addis Ababa University

12:30 PM EDT CLOSING REMARKS

12:45-1:30 PM EDT LUNCH



ABSTRACTS AND BIOGRAPHIES

SESSION 1: MIGRATION NARRATIVES IN SETTLER COLONIAL NATIONS



Chair: John Carlaw | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

John Carlaw is Research Fellow, CERC Migration, at the Toronto Metropolitan University. He holds a PhD in political science and a diploma in Latin American and Caribbean studies from York University. His work examines the politics of citizenship, immigration and multiculturalism, including his current projects: CONTESTATIONS of Migration and Belonging in Canada amidst COVID-19 and *Neoconservative Multiculturalism: The Conservative Party of Canada and the Politics of Citizenship, Migration and Multiculturalism in Settler Colonial Canada* (manuscript form). John organized and leads CERC Migration's graduate student mentorship program and has taught at York University and Trent University. From 2015 to 2019, he served as Project Lead of York University's Syria Response and Refugee Initiative, a refugee-sponsorship and -education initiative at York's Centre for Refugee Studies. His work appears in Canadian diversity = Diversite Canadienne, the CERC/TMCIS Working Paper Series, *The Conversation*, *the Journal of Canadian Studies*, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, and *Studies in Political Economy*.

The complex and competing narratives concerning migration and migrants in settler colonial states: The case of the CANZ (Canada, Australia, New Zealand) states



Paul Spoonley | Massey University

The CANZ states share similar broad historical trajectories of colonization and Indigenous-nations dispossession accompanied by racialized and discriminatory immigration policies that lasted well into the 20th century. In the latter half of the century, regimes of immigrant recruitment reflected more contemporary economically oriented narratives influenced by neo-liberal assumptions and politics. New legal and residency/citizenship categories and statuses emerged with varied settlement trajectories and outcomes. The racialization of who is an acceptable or unacceptable migrant continues alongside narratives that represent contemporary neo-liberal assumptions and priorities and sometimes reflect historical and colonial influences. State-sponsored and -managed policies of diversity recognition and management compound this further, notably in the form of official policies of multiculturalism. Critical approaches to superdiversity offer an understanding of the complex terrain of narratives and designations that are deployed in societies that have used migration as an essential part of building a modern nation-state. Highly problematic are the assumptions that underpin what constitutes the nation, especially given the hegemonic and powerful status of white groups (or fractions of them) and the ongoing dispossession and marginalization of Indigenous nations. This presentation explores these narratives, including the presence of unhelpful binaries and the need to explicitly consider the role and narratives surrounding white hegemony and the positioning of Indigenous nations. One option is the approach offered by a decoloniality-inspired superdiversity that recognizes the range of narratives and statuses, material inequalities and possibilities provided by co-production.

Paul Spoonley is Distinguished Professor and is retired from Massey University, where he was Pro Vice-Chancellor of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2022, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern appointed him Co-director of He Whenua Taurikura: The National Centre on Countering Violent Extremism. He is an advisor to the New Zealand Police Commissioner on a project on systemic racism in policing. He has written or edited 29 books; the most recent are *The New New Zealand: Facing Demographic Disruption* (Massey University Press, 2021) and *Histories of Hate: The Radical Right in Aotearoa/New Zealand* (Otago University Press, 2022). He was a Program Leader of research on the impacts of immigration and diversity on Aotearoa (2014-2021). Paul was made a Fellow of the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2011; he was a Fulbright



Senior Scholar at the University of California, Berkeley, in 2010; and he is a Visiting Researcher at the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity in Göttingen, Germany. He is also Co-chair of Metropolis International.

Power, migration narratives and the elimination of the native: Citizenship and belonging in Canada, Australia and the United States



Yasmeen Abu-Laban | University of Alberta

Migration studies scholars have long neglected to address settler colonialism, although in recent years this has begun to shift as a result of changes on the ground and in scholarship. These changes include the salience of the 2007 United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, more attention paid to the multigenerational violent impacts of boarding/residential schools on Indigenous communities and new forms of theorization emerging from the field of settler colonial studies. This talk takes as its focus evolving migration narratives in the settler colonies of Canada, Australia and the United States, particularly since overt racial discrimination was removed from immigration policies in the 1960s and 70s. It is argued that while various policy changes allowed for more inclusionary impulses in relation to citizenship and citizenship rights, these have fed migration narratives that make Indigenous peoples invisible and whiteness a site of racialized privilege in relation to land, resources and power.

Yasmeen Abu-Laban is Professor of Political Science and Canada Research Chair in Politics of Citizenship and Human Rights at the University of Alberta. She is also a Fellow at the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research. Her published research addresses themes related to nationalism, globalization and processes of racialization, immigration policies and politics, surveillance and border control and multiculturalism and anti-racism. Her most recent book, co-authored with Ethel Tungohan and Christina Gabriel, is *Containing Diversity: Canada and the Politics of Immigration in the 21st Century* (University of Toronto Press, 2023).

Incarcerated stories: Indigenous women and violence in the settler capitalist state



Shannon Speed (Chickasaw) | University of California, Los Angeles

This presentation will share recent research that draws on the oral histories of Indigenous women migrants from Central America and Mexico taken while they were based (mostly) in immigration detention centers of Central Texas. The research aimed to explore the structural nature of the violence to which these women have been subjected, seemingly at every step of their journeys. This exploration moves with the women migrants through space, considering how ideologies of gender, race, class and nationality function in conjunction with neoliberal market logics in the violence they experience at home, on their journey, and in the United States, through policing, detention and human trafficking. Through the women's experiences, conclusions are drawn about the state of the states of Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico and the United States, which are characterized as neoliberal "multicriminalism" in relation to the settler structures of Indigenous dispossession and elimination. The presentation will argue that Indigenous women's vulnerability to violence is not a condition of the women themselves, but rather a structural condition created through the settler colonial process that, while functioning differently across space and time, nevertheless consistently deploys raced and gendered ideologies to manage the on-going business of settler occupation and capitalist exploitation.

Shannon Speed is a tribal citizen of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma. She is Director of the American Indian Studies Center (AISC) and Professor of Gender Studies and Anthropology at UCLA. Shannon has worked for the last two decades in Mexico and in the United States on issues



of Indigenous autonomy, sovereignty, gender, neoliberalism, violence, migration, social justice and activist research. She has published numerous journal articles and book chapters in English and Spanish, and has published seven books and edited volumes, including her most recent, *Incarcerated Stories: Indigenous Women Migrants and Violence in the Settler Capitalist State*, which won the Best Subsequent Book Award of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association in 2019 and a CHOICE Outstanding Academic Title award in 2020. She has a new co-edited volume entitled, *Heightened States of Injustice: Activist Research on Indigenous Women and Violence* (University of Arizona Press). Shannon currently serves as the Past President of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA). In recent years, she was awarded the Chickasaw Dynamic Woman of the Year Award by the Chickasaw Nation, and the Lifetime Achievement Award from the State Bar of Texas Indian Law Section.

SESSION 2: MIGRATION NARRATIVES IN THE ERA OF SOCIAL MEDIA



Chair: Stein Monteiro | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

Stein Monteiro is Senior Research Associate, CERC Migration, at Toronto Metropolitan University. His research focuses on the economics of immigration and the socio-structural characteristics of immigrant-labour market integration, including the roles of family dynamics, internet usage, social networks, statistical discrimination and information asymmetries among employers. Stein has a PhD in economics from York University and has published in the *Journal of Applied Economics*, the *Review of Economic Analysis*, the *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies* and *SN Social Sciences*.

Understanding digital racism and xenophobia: Toward a theoretical model



Mattias Ekman | Stockholm University

In recent decades, anti-immigrant, racist and nationalist attitudes have been increasingly mainstreamed, transforming public debates on immigration and immigrants in Europe and beyond. These attitudes and sentiments have not only been widely distributed but also amplified through digital communication, including commercial social-media platforms. In order to understand the relation between racism/xenophobia and digital communication, this talk will propose a multi-theoretical approach to the notion of digital racism and move beyond media-centric explanations. By bridging sociological, political and communicative/technical perspectives, panelists will unfold the complexity of digital racism. A theoretical model is proposed using examples from empirical research on digital racism from various national and political contexts to assess (hyper)masculinity, affect, femonationalism, far-right/right-wing populist strategies, conspiracy thinking and the socio-technological affordances of social media. The presentation will show how these perspectives interlock at the macro, meso and micro levels of digital racism. In conclusion, the wider social and political implications of digital racism, including the possible impact on policy, will be discussed.

Mattias Ekman is Associate Professor of Media and Communication Studies at Stockholm University. Mattias's research interests include online political mobilization, political communication, online racism and far-right online media and communication strategies. He is the director of the research project Interactive Racism in Swedish Online Media, Press and Politics: Discourses on Immigration and Refugees at Times of Crisis and is a co-researcher in the project Immigration and the Normalization of Racism: Discursive Shifts in Swedish Politics and Media 2010-22, both funded by the Swedish Research Council. For more than a decade, Mattias has published widely on the relationships between digital media, the far and populist right and racism and xenophobia. He is a member of the International Advisory Board of the Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies on Racism at Uppsala University and chairs the political communication division of NordMedia.



Examining anti-social behaviour in online discussions about the 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine



Anatoliy Gruzd | Toronto Metropolitan University

Ukraine has long been a target for the Kremlin's disinformation campaigns. Since the 2014 annexation of Crimea, Russia has employed a variety of information-operation tactics to undermine the Ukrainian government and destabilize Ukrainian society. For example, Russia deployed a network of paid Internet trolls via the Internet Research Agency to spread disinformation in and about Ukraine. The use of these tactics has only intensified during Russia's 2022 invasion. This presentation will focus on a common tactic of information operations – their reliance on troublesome anti-social behaviours like online trolling, cyberbullying and hate speech to harass and silence opponents. While what is commonly viewed as anti-social may be a communal norm and means of socializing in some online communities, that is not the case in most, where such behaviour may negatively affect group cohesion and have psychological and emotional consequences on individual social-media users. This presentation will demonstrate how to use automated content analysis to detect and study anti-social behaviour on social media in the context of online discussions related to the 2022 Russia-Ukraine war.

Anatoliy Gruzd is Professor and Director of Research at the Social Media Lab of Toronto Metropolitan University. Situated at the intersections of social-media research, information management and communication, Anatoliy's multidisciplinary program focuses on how social-media data can be used to tackle a wide variety of societal problems, from helping educators and students navigate social media for teaching and learning to studying the nature and scale of online misinformation and disinformation about Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Anatoliy is currently serving his second term as a Canada Research Chair examining the application of new privacy-preserving technologies like blockchains and differential privacy, particularly in academic research settings.

“Breadth – depth – back to breadth”: What can we learn about migration narratives among non-elites on Twitter through the application of computational and qualitative social science analytical strategies?



Bindi Shah | University of Southampton

This presentation will discuss an innovative and interdisciplinary methodology to investigate migration narratives on Twitter. A data-driven but theoretically informed approach is proposed and draws on computational and qualitative social-science analytical techniques. The corpus consisted of 47,978 tweets created between Oct. 1, 2013, and March 1, 2014, that contain keywords related to migration narratives in the U.K. at a time when temporary transition controls on free movement from Romania and Bulgaria were lifted. The initial analysis (breadth work) revealed a few highly influential users (media elites) with high digital capital and a large proportion of isolated users (non-elites) with low digital capital who were never retweeted. A qualitative thematic analysis (depth work) confirmed the presence of highly polarized immigration attitudes among non-elites as well as values and beliefs embedded in these narratives that have implications for the construction of the symbolic boundaries of the nation. This analysis found that the entire media environment and the presence of echo chambers among those expressing anti-immigrant sentiments influence these values among non-elites, but it did not find these same factors as influential among those expressing pro-immigrant sentiments. This presentation will demonstrate the potential of inter-disciplinary and iterative analytical strategies to grapple with big data in a fashion that allows for the development of the sociological imagination.

Bindi Shah is Associate Professor in Sociology at the University of Southampton. Her research interests address migration, religion, nationhood, citizenship and belonging with respect to



Asian Americans and British South Asians, the Jain diaspora and wider migration flows to the U.K. She is also interested in the role social capital plays in fostering environmental/climate sustainability and justice among marginalized groups. She is author of *Laotian Daughters: Working toward Community, Belonging and Environmental Justice* (Temple University Press, 2012), which received the 2014 Association for Asian American Studies Award for Outstanding Book in the Social Sciences. Currently, she leads the Ramniklal Solanki Pioneers Project, which aims to create a digital archive documenting the lives of British South Asians who have made a significant contribution to the making of modern Britain. She is also involved in a public engagement, intergenerational project to understand British South Asians' perceptions of BBC South Asian programming from the 1960s onward.

ROUNDTABLE: MIGRATION AND MOBILITY NARRATIVES IN THE ARTS



Chair: Anna Triandafyllidou and Orit Kamir | Centre for Human Dignity

Anna Triandafyllidou holds the Canada Excellence Research Chair in Migration and Integration, at Toronto Metropolitan University. Previously, she was based at the European University Institute, where she held the Robert Schuman Chair on Global Pluralism. She edits the *Journal of Immigrant & Refugee Studies*, and she is Chair of the IMISCOE Editorial Committee and a member of its board of directors. A Sociologist by training, her research focuses on migration and asylum governance as well as national identity and cultural and religious diversity in comparative perspective. In 2021, the University of Liège awarded Anna with a doctorate honoris causa in recognition of her contribution to migration scholarship. Her recently authored books include *What is Europe?* with Ruby Gropas (2nd ed., Routledge, 2022) and *Rethinking Migration and Return in Southeastern Europe* with Eda Gemi (Routledge, 2021). Her articles have recently appeared in the *Journal of Ethnic & Migration Studies*, *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Society*, *Ethnicities*, *Comparative Migration Studies*, *International Migration* and *Nations and Nationalism*.



Orit Kamir is Professor of Law, Gender and Culture at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Much of her academic research explores the complex interrelations of law, gender and film, including the monographs *Every Breath You Take: Stalking Stories and the Law* (University of Michigan Press, 2001) and *Framed: Women in Law and Film* (Duke University Press, 2006). A big part of her scholarship explores the intricate histories of honour and dignity in societies, cultures and legal systems (see *Betraying Dignity: The Toxic Seduction of Social Media, Shaming, and Radicalization* [Fairleigh Dickinson Press, 2020]). Orit is Co-founder and Academic Head of The Israeli Center for Human Dignity. She has drafted legislation, including Israel's 1998 law to prevent sexual harassment and is a social and feminist activist in Israel. She currently promotes legislation and conducts workplace training to alleviate workplace bullying.

The narratives of migration: Between politics and policies



Cyrus Sundar Singh | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

Throughout history, people have captured, documented and disseminated migration stories through a variety of creative art and media. They framed their stories on banana leaves, cave walls and stained glass; in lullabies, songs and symphonies; through poetry, theatre and cinema. And they managed all that even before the advent of television, satellites and space travel. The digital technology of the 21st century has not only allowed people to more easily access, capture, document and disseminate stories, it has also allowed greater ability to intervene, interfere and mediate the message. In this open round table conversation, the panel will discuss how the line between curator and storyteller can be navigated and how migration and mobility narratives can be framed within an academic and artistic lens.

Cyrus Sundar Singh is an AcademiCreActivist and Gemini Award-winning Filmmaker, Scholar, Songwriter, Composer, Poet and Change Maker who pushes conventional boundaries to produce research, films and



music in a myriad of venues and formats, including broadcasts, festivals and conferences. He is a much sought-after creative Scholar and Guest Lecturer, and he undertakes research and production projects in settings around the world, including India, Israel, Spain, Haiti, Jamaica and Sri Lanka. Most recently, Cyrus directed the *i am...* storytelling project, which includes 28 short films by graduate students from across Canada exploring identity and belonging. In 2022, he repeated this success with *Under the Tent*, which comprises 18 creative projects unpacking Canadian multiculturalism. His recent essays are published in peer-reviewed collections, including “Floating to the Lure of the Promised Land” in *Finding Refuge in Canada: Narratives of Dislocation* (Athabasca University Press, 2021) and “How We See: The Colourization of Race in Gnosis” in the *Journal of Philosophy* (2020). Cyrus’s photo and video installation *Emancipation2Africville* formed part of *Africville: A Spirit that Lives On*, a 2019 reflection project at the Mount Saint Vincent University Art Gallery and footage at the WC2 Network’s 2018 symposium in Toronto.

Deconstructing narratives from the narrative maker point of view



Alberto Bougleux | Documentary Filmmaker

When one addresses the problem of deconstructing narratives on migration or any other topic, the task is very commonly approached from the point of view of the audience – that is, people who are not directly involved in the factual making of a certain narrative but who find it already available in the wide market of cultural content and develop a critical discourse around it. Instead, this talk takes the point of view of the documentary filmmaker – the narrative maker – in order to explore how a permanent deconstruction-reconstruction process is daily at stake in any form of storytelling, both technically and semantically. In this sense, a hands-on approach to the making of audiovisual narratives on mobility and migration can offer insights into both aleatory and convention-based nature of every narrative and the efforts needed for reshaping the hegemonic ones in the public sphere.

Alberto Bougleux is a Documentary Filmmaker based in Barcelona and with experience working in over 20 countries around the world. He specializes in life stories and using new formats of social documentary and digital storytelling as innovative methodologies and dissemination tools. His work has evolved around issues of environmental justice, migration and transnational mobility (living between countries) and the (trans)formation of cities through migration.

Collaborating across disciplines



Bernadette Klausberger | Migration Matters

Film is a complex tool to design narratives yet a powerful one for reaching wider audiences. The outreach and impact of migration research can significantly benefit from audiovisual tools and the collaboration of scholars with artists and designers. When creating audiovisual projects together, new challenges arise across disciplines. Collaborators brings new modes of working together, different principles to storytelling and new formats and channels of dissemination of film and text within and beyond the academic world – all of which need to be resolved for a seamless production. Drawing on the practical experience of a range of projects in collaboration with migration scholars and students at the Berlin-based NGO Migration Matters, this talk will illustrate and further explore fundamental questions of media production, including the following: Whose voices are heard? What challenges do those outside of the media profession face behind and in front of the camera? How can we allow for complexity and nuance, even in short formats? And how can we create empathy and understanding by making an audience personally relate to the content?

Bernadette Klausberger is a Media Producer, Art Festival Manager and Lecturer. She has produced a range of award-winning audiovisual projects, from documentaries to experimental fiction and auteur projects, among them the German-Lebanese co-production *Manivelle: Last Days of the*



Man of Tomorrow (2017). Bernadette has a special focus on projects at the intersections of art, education and politics. For the last 10 years, she has co-created and produced Massive Open Online Courses, among them *The Future of Storytelling*, ranked as one of the most successful courses the organization has ever produced. For *Migration Matters* and together with international migration scholars, she has developed an extensive series of educational videos on topics like nationalism, populism, multiculturalism and belonging. The latest project, *Migrant Lives in Pandemic Times*, is a film series and digital storytelling platform initiated by CERC Migration; it documents the insights of migrants from around the world and combines them with academic analysis.

SESSION 3: NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION IN EMERGING REGIONAL POWERS



Chair: Jérémie Molho | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

Jérémie Molho is Senior Research Associate, CERC Migration, at Toronto Metropolitan University and previously Marie Curie Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute. From 2019 to 2021, he was a member of the Asian Urbanisms cluster at the Asian Research Institute at the National University of Singapore. He has a PhD in geography from the University of Angers. His research interests include the effects of cultural globalization on cities, urban cultural policies and the governance of diversity. Since 2017, his research has focused on the governance of diversity in Doha and Singapore.

Turkey's migration narratives and strategic temporality



Zeynep Sahin-Mencütek | Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies and CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

During its 10 years hosting massive numbers of Syrian refugees and as a transit hub for so-called irregular migrants and country of origin for many migrants, Turkey has adopted a wide repertoire of political narratives. The narratives contain strategic ambiguities that give space for the speakers to manoeuvre in terms of defining the audience (e.g., domestic versus international public), the agenda of the event and support for policy changes (e.g., accommodative to restrictive). These narratives constitute the core of policy responses and provide strong mechanisms for legitimizing them. They also cross over to issues such as development, security and politics. They function not only to construct the nation-state in terms of humanitarianism, generosity and being a great power but also to mobilize social and political resources to manage migration. These narratives are dynamic; they change as they are challenged by multiple non-state actors such as municipalities, civil society organizations, political parties or migrants themselves.

Zeynep Sahin Mencütek is Senior Researcher at the Bonn International Centre for Conflict Studies, where she leads a comparative project on return and reintegration. She is also Research Affiliate with CERC Migration at the Toronto Metropolitan University, where she conducts joint research on the transnational governance of migration. She held the prestigious Alexander von Humboldt Research Fellowship for Experienced Researchers (June 2020–May 2021) and an international fellowship at the Centre for Global Cooperation Research in Duisburg (2019–2020). She also served as Senior Researcher for the Horizon 2020 project RESPOND: Multilevel Governance of Mass Migration in Europe and Beyond. Previously, she served as an assistant professor in Turkey, and in 2018, she achieved the rank of docent in the field of international relations. Her research examines the governance of migration, return migration, diaspora politics and Middle Eastern politics. Along with her monograph, *Refugee Governance, State and Politics in the Middle East* (Routledge, 2018), she has published dozens of articles in internationally refereed journals, chapters in international collected volumes, encyclopaedia entries, book reviews and policy reports. In 2011, she received her PhD in politics and international relations from the University of Southern California.



Migration and development in Morocco: A myth!



Mehdi Lahlou | National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics

Moroccan migration policies have been designed around a triple-win assumption, notably that migration produces remittances for the migrant's household and for the country while also catering to labour shortages at destination. In the absence of an endogenous, proactive economic and social policy, the government constructed a narrative around migration and development that saw the diaspora as a crucial actor in promoting the nation's socio-economic development. The narrative also supported the country's diaspora policy and politics, which reinforced a national identity and were ostensibly aimed at protecting the rights of Moroccans living abroad. This migration and development narrative has remained dominant for over 60 years even though the reality on the ground is quite different from what it postulates. Morocco remains seen as a developing country with a low level of per capita income (about \$3,000 USD/person/year in 2022), and the country is losing, through both legal and irregular pathways, significant human capital. Morocco could actually be cited as a counter-example to the dominant migration and development narrative, as a closer look into its case demonstrates that this migration and development paradigm is both untruthful and unsustainable.

Mehdi Lahlou is Professor of Economics. He taught at the National Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics in Rabat, Morocco, and was an associate researcher at Mohammed V University in Rabat. He is a contributing researcher to the Horizon 2022 project GREASE, Religious Diversity Governance in Europe, Asia, and North Africa. He is a member of the Advisory Board of the European Horizon 2020 project Co-radicalisation of Youth in Europe: Islamophobia vs. Islamism. He coordinates the Mediterranean City-to-City Migration project, supported by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development, and the Returning to New Opportunities program, supported by the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit. Recent collaborations have been undertaken with Keele University - UK (within a North African project, called MADAR) and with colleagues at the European University Institute, University of Montreal, the University of Paris, Institute of Political Studies, and the Lucian Blaga University of Sibiu. He is a member of the Knowledge Platform for Migration Governance in Africa. In 1982, he earned his PhD in economics from Université Paris 1, Panthéon-Sorbonne.

Evolving migration narratives in Russia



Andrei V. Korobkov | Middle Tennessee State University

During a relatively brief period following the Soviet Union's dissolution in 1991, Russia evolved from one of the most isolated countries in the world to the centre of Eurasia, one of the four largest immigration systems on the planet (along with those in Western Europe, North America and the Persian Gulf). This shift marked the reversal of centuries-old migration narratives in Russia and Central Eurasia that were based on the country's general isolation and the massive movement of ethnic Russians (both the commoners and the elites) to the ethnic periphery. By the end of the Soviet period, more than 25 million Russians lived outside the Russian Federation. This talk examines Russia's changing migration narrative since the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which resulted in a swift reversal of historical narratives. Initially, the new narrative was related to the permanent, primarily politically and ethnically motivated return migration of ethnic Russians to the federation. It was soon replaced by a new narrative: the massive, mostly temporary labour migration to Russia of citizens from newly formed states in the former imperial ethnic periphery. Meanwhile, Russia experienced the parallel emergence of a third narrative related to a significant flow of elite emigration



primarily to Europe and North America. The pandemic and the ongoing invasion of Ukraine since February 2022 could be impacting those narratives, slowing down migration to Russia and leading to the intensification of the elite and other types of emigration (youth, male) as well as the change in the direction of migration flows, including the formation of principally new ones (to a number of post-Soviet states and Global South countries).

Andrei Korobkov is Professor of Political Science and International Relations and Russian Studies Minor Director at Middle Tennessee State University. Andrei graduated from Moscow State University and holds a PhD in economics from the Institute of International Economic and Political Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences and a PhD in political science from the University of Alabama. His academic interests include issues of post-communist transition, international migration, geopolitics, state- and nation-building, ethnic conflict and the emerging economies of Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. He has previously served as U.S. Co-chair of the working group on migration at the U.S.-Russia Social Expertise Exchange and as President of the Post-Communist States in International Relations section of the International Studies Association, where he currently serves as the Section Vice President and Program Chair.

Countering containment and combatting migrant “immoralities”



Loren B. Landau | University of Oxford and University of the Witwatersrand

Excluding immigrants and outsiders is evidently spatial, social and political. Underlying such boundary-defining exercises are narratives locating people along varied spatial-temporal trajectories. Depending on one's origin, race or religion, such framings naturalize where people belong and the nature of their expectations for expansive or limited physical mobility. To regulate and legitimize Western campaigns to spatially exclude would-be migrants from the Global South, states and international organizations increasingly rely on narratives that place Africans and others outside a shared or universal future. Their self-realization depends on what is thought of as development at home, while modernized Europeans and Asians are able to flourish through global mobility. This talk argues that many migration and development initiatives, the collection of migration data and the language of humanitarianism further this agenda through a form of chronoscopy that seeks to identify those migrants who may move and correct their behaviour before they threaten themselves and those around them. Border controls then move to protect rather than segregate lives. The talk reflects – speculates, really – on what forms of resistance or countermoves might mean within an increasingly fragmented spatio-temporal imaginary in which every African who even considers moving is criminalized and stigmatized. It will argue that appeals to rights and welfare within existing norms of national sovereignty fail to address these fragmenting and moralizing narratives. Without an alternative narrative, these may achieve short-term wins for individual migrants or groups but are only likely to reinforce the cognitive divides fortifying contemporary migration controls.

Loren B. Landau is Professor of Migration and Development at the University of Oxford and Research Professor with the African Centre for Migration & Society at the University of the Witwatersrand. Together with Jean Pierre Misago, he is Co-founder and Co-director of the Wits-Oxford Mobility Governance Lab. He previously held visiting and faculty positions at Princeton University, Georgetown University and the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy. His interdisciplinary scholarship explores mobility, multi-scale governance and the transformation of socio-political community across the Global South. He holds a PhD in political science from the University of California, Berkeley. Loren's publications include *I Want to Go Home Forever: Stories of Becoming and Belonging in South Africa's Great Metropolis* (Wits Press, 2018); *Forging African Communities: Mobility, Integration, and Belonging* (Palgrave, 2017); *Exorcising the Demons Within: Xenophobia, Violence and Statecraft in Contemporary South Africa* (UN University Press/Wits Press, 2012); *Contemporary Migration to South Africa* (World Bank, 2011); and *The Humanitarian Hangover: Displacement, Aid, and Transformation in Western Tanzania* (Wits Press, 2008).



SESSION 4: NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION IN CITY-STATES



Chair: Richa Shivakoti | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

Richa Shivakoti is Research Lead, Migration Governance, CERC Migration, at Toronto Metropolitan University. Previously, she worked at Carleton University, Maastricht University, the International Organization for Migration and the International Labour Organization. Her research focus is on the governance of labour migration within Asia, particularly in the labour-sending states of South Asia and Southeast Asia. She is interested in the different facets of the migration-development nexus, including remittance, gender, diaspora, migration governance and international labour migration. Her recent publications have appeared in *International Migration*, *Administrative Theory & Praxis*, the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, *Comparative Migration Studies* and the *Journal of Asian Public Policy*.

Migration narratives in Singapore: From economic imperatives to counter-perspectives on ethnicity and age



Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho | National University of Singapore

Populated by current cohorts of immigrants and Singaporeans of migrant ancestry, Singapore is both a migration hub and a city-state. Alongside its migration histories, Singapore's post-independence development has long emphasized a managed migration approach. The Singapore state welcomes highly paid foreigners to fill talent gaps while bringing in lowly paid migrant workers to do the work shunned by Singaporeans, concomitantly and sharply distinguishing between the rights and privileges of the two groups. This presentation will first discuss how Singapore's economically driven migration strategy has evolved in the wake of the pandemic, an evolution partly induced by developments during the crisis. Second, the presentation will consider the politics of co-ethnic migration that has surfaced in recent years in the context of the migration policies and narratives shaping Singapore's development. Third, the presentation turns to the hitherto less discussed topic of how local Singaporeans are aging alongside both settled and temporary older immigrants, providing a counter-perspective to the state's prevailing emphasis on younger migrants. This discussion brings to view how statist migration narratives prioritizing economic imperatives also need to address the social dimensions of migration and how they are narrated – and sometimes contested – by migrants and citizens.

Elaine Lynn-Ee Ho is Professor in the Department of Geography and Senior Research Fellow in the Asia Research Institute of the National University of Singapore. Her research addresses how citizenship is changing as a result of multidirectional migration flows in Asia-Pacific. Her fieldwork sites include Singapore, China and Myanmar. In Singapore, through various research projects, she has studied how Singaporeans and migrants mutually negotiate social differences. She wrote *Citizens in Motion: Emigration, Immigration and Re-migration Across China's Borders* (Stanford University Press, 2018), which received the American Sociological Association's 2019 award for Best Book in Global and Transnational Sociology by an International Scholar. Elaine edits the journal *Social and Cultural Geography* and serves on the editorial boards of journals exploring geography, citizenship studies and migration.



Narrative of governing emigration: A case study in Hong Kong



Eric Fong | University of Hong Kong

Policy narratives render legitimacy for the government to implement certain policies. They also provide it with justification for the consequences of the policies it has implemented. Sometimes, government narratives can be seen as a means of influencing interpretations of unfolding events. Such efforts are important for governments, as how events are interpreted shapes the formation of the collective memory in the future, which serves for the evaluation of governance. This talk's analysis focuses on discussions by the general public and the government's narrative on emigration from Hong Kong in the past two years during the COVID-19 pandemic. The general discussion usually suggests that the emigration wave is related to the large-scale social unrest in 2019 and the perceived societal changes that followed. This discussion shows that, in contrast, the government frames the current emigration wave with alternative explanations of how it has occurred. The key point of the government's narrative is to dissociate the emigration wave from past events of social unrest. It emphasizes that the increase in emigration from Hong Kong is a result of widespread rollouts of COVID-19 vaccinations in the world, which have promoted travel and the gradual reopening of borders with many countries since last year.

Eric Fong is Chair Professor in Sociology and Head of the Department of Sociology at the University of Hong Kong. He joined the university in 2020 after serving as Chair of the Department of Sociology and the inaugural Director of the Research Centre on Migration and Mobility at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. Prior to moving to Hong Kong in 2016, Eric was Professor of Sociology at the University of Toronto for more than 20 years. He currently serves as President of the Hong Kong Sociological Association. He formerly served as President of the Canadian Population Society and the North American Chinese Sociologists Association. He publishes widely on race and ethnic residential patterns and immigration. His latest book, co-authored with Kumiko Shibuya and Brent Berry, is *Segregation* (Polity Press, 2022).



SESSION 5: REGIONAL MIGRATION NARRATIVES: THE CASES OF WEST AND EAST AFRICA



Chair: Oreva Olakpe | CERC Migration, Toronto Metropolitan University

Oreva Olakpe researches how communities without status (e.g., irregular migrants and cross-border minorities) in the Global South form institutional structures and make space for themselves in their society of settlement. Oreva has studied sub-Saharan African migrant businessmen with mostly expired status, African asylum seekers in China and a cross-border minority at the Cameroon-Nigeria border. She has also recently worked on EU-funded projects on migrant integration, migration partnerships and approaches to forced displacement in West Africa. She has carried out research on African migrations and informal communal structures, funded by the Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa. She received a PhD in law from the School of Oriental and African Studies at the University of London.

Confronting migration narratives with aspirations and the ability to move in Ghana



Melissa Mouthaan | Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and University of Cambridge

Migration has long been an important livelihood strategy for young people in Ghana. Ghanaians have mainly migrated for reasons related to employment, education or training, marriage and family reunification and political persecution. Efforts to control migration date from the colonial period, and recent migration governance has become institutionalized in regional frameworks, Ghana's national migration policy and bilateral labour-migration arrangements. International actors' interventions in Ghana have also brought specific narratives around managing migration for development combined with neo-liberal development agendas that emphasize the role of migrants and would-be migrants in contributing to local development. This presentation will detail the central policy narratives around migration, immobility and development as espoused by external and domestic policy actors, and it will contrast them with youth perceptions, local socio-economic realities, youth aspirations and a so-called culture of migration. The findings draw on two distinct studies conducted from 2016 to 2018, including documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews with government officials as well as other migration stakeholders in Accra and an ethnographic study of children and young people in British-Ghanaian transnational households. Applying a political economy of migration lens, this presentation argues that migration narratives that ignore socio-economic realities and youth aspirations and perceptions are unlikely to resonate in communities of migrant departure in Ghana.

Melissa Mouthaan is Policy Analyst at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Centre for Educational Research and Innovation. She is a Sociologist interested in the politics of policy-making in migration and education, and she holds a PhD in development studies from the University of Cambridge. Her doctoral research focused on the European Union's migration-related cooperation with West African countries. Previously, she worked in research at a not-for-profit organization at the University of Cambridge and for the European Commission's in-house research centre.



Unpacked narratives on migration governance and gender in West Africa



Mary Boatemaa Setrana | University of Ghana

Much of the narratives on West African migration ignore gender perspectives or tend to focus on women as gendered, while men are portrayed as, perhaps unwittingly, neutral or ungendered. These narratives present different perspectives on how migration and gender intersect in the region. Unfortunately, narratives on migration governance and gender that perceive female migration as disempowering and a breakdown of traditional family systems have dominated the West African regional migration narratives and shaped how male and female migrants and migration are perceived and understood, and they have had considerable influence on policy approaches. Migration narratives from West Africa tend to focus on the migration of males as the so-called bread winners and, therefore, the movers at the expense of females as the stayers; this restricts understandings of the complexity of the region's gender issues. To decolonize knowledge production on such narratives, this presentation unpacks the discourses surrounding the linkages between migration governance and gender for a better understanding of the narratives framing debates and policy, the actors of such narratives and the effects of those narratives on shaping migration governance and gender issues in the region.

Mary Boatemaa Setrana is Director of the Centre for Migration Studies at the University of Ghana, where she leads large research projects funded by the European Union, the International Organization for Migration, the International Labour Organization, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, the Worldwide Universities Network and the Carnegie Corporation of New York. She led the finalization of Botswana's national migration policy and consulted on the development of national migration policies in Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe as well as the labour migration policy in Malawi. Mary served as a technical advisor to the African Union Commission's work on migration governance. She is currently an advisory board member of the African Research Universities Alliance's Centre of Excellence on Migration and Mobility. Her research interests include forced migration and displacement, migration governance and gender, youth migration and aspirations and transnational migration and diasporas.

Narratives on the free movement of people in West Africa



Amanda Bisong | European Centre for Development Policy Management

Current partial narratives ignore relevant contexts that support a broader understanding of migration and mobility from a Global South perspective. This presentation draws on policy documents and academic literature to identify six dominant narratives on the concept of free movement of persons in West Africa, thus contributing to a holistic understanding of migration and mobility in the region. This presentation also shows that pro-mobility narratives are indicative of how regional integration and its acceptance by states have evolved as responses to colonial imputations of migration in addition to the promotion of neo-liberal economic development and Pan-Africanism. While external narratives may influence migration and mobility in West Africa to a certain extent, nationalist interests evident in narratives around security and identity politics have more immediate effects on migration policies and practice, diffusing into the regional level. Adopting the lens of Third World Approaches to International Law (focusing on the historical evolution of the Global South and the effects of colonialism, neo-colonialism and the stages of political and economic development), the presentation will examine how the concept of the free movement of persons in West Africa is evolving based on the interactions between external and national narratives, emphasizing the importance of recentring African narratives in regional migration governance regimes.

Amanda Bisong is Policy Officer in the Migration and Mobility Team of The Centre for Africa-Europe Relations in Maastricht, The Netherlands. She has a background in law and master's degrees in international law and economics (World Trade Institute) and international trade policy and trade law (Lund University).



She is currently pursuing a PhD on migration governance in West Africa at the Faculty of Law in Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. Her research focuses on migration agreements, labour migration, migration governance, the linkages between trade and migration in Africa and the interplay between regional and national commitments. In recent years, she has published several research articles on migration governance.

Regional migration narratives: The case of East Africa



Girmachew Adugna | Addis Ababa University

Migration from and within the Horn of Africa (HoA) is complex. The complexity stems not only from the magnitude of outflows and drivers of that movement but also from the diversity of the movers as well as their place of origin and country of destination. The mobility of people from the HoA is increasingly characterized by the intra- and extra-regional nature of their movement within the continent and other regions in the Global South, mainly the Middle East. This presentation argues that despite the fact that the trans-Saharan-Mediterranean migration route is less significant for East African migrants, it remains the dominant narrative. This narrative is pronounced in many areas ranging from policy and politics to research and media as well as migration-related project interventions, which are often supported by the European Union or its member states. Irregular migration, especially through the northern route – from the HoA to Sudan, Libya to Italy, and beyond – is also dominating the migration discourse, such as through campaigns tackling the root cause, which is often assumed to be poverty. However, this movement can be attributed to a combination of factors, namely conflict, environmental change, the culture of migration, local and transnational social networks and limited pathways for legal migration options. Local migration narratives in Ethiopia and other countries in the region focus more on the securitization of the southern borders of the European Union and negative perceptions toward African migrants. Indeed, border securitization is also a concern among African countries, and intra-African migration is often negatively framed. However, this nuance is missing from the migration conversation. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to this perception, as the region experienced massive-scale forced return flows, mainly from the Persian Gulf and other countries in Africa.

Girmachew Adugna is Policy Officer for Migration and Refugees at the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, and he received his PhD in human geography from the University of Adelaide. His thesis examined the impact of migration and remittances on home communities in Ethiopia. Girmachew was a Research Fellow at the Hugo Centre for Population and Migration Research at the University of Adelaide. He has published in international peer-reviewed journals on migration, remittances, diaspora engagement and transnational family ties. Girmachew has worked for several national and international organizations and has been engaged in research and consultation on internal and international migration issues in Ethiopia and across the HoA.





Toronto
Metropolitan
University

Canada Excellence
Research Chair in
Migration & Integration



Email: CERC.Migration@torontomu.ca

www.torontomu.ca/cerc-migration



